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[4.]

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INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL
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Miscellaneous No. 9 (1939)

DOCUMENTS

CONCERNING

GERMAN-POLISH RELATIONS

AND THE

OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND GERMANY ON SEPTEMBER 3, 1939

Presented by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Parliament by Command of His Majesty

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3. I feel that the main objects of inserting this underlined passage in his letter was (*a*) to indicate that Germany could not be intimidated; and (*b*) to serve as an excuse for general mobilisation if and when Herr Hitler decides on it.

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No. 60.

Communication from the German Chancellor to the Prime Minister, handed to His Majesty's Ambassador on August 28, 1939.

(Translation.)

Your Excellency,

THE British Ambassador has just handed to me a communication in which your Excellency draws attention in the name of the British Government to a number of points which in your estimation are of the greatest importance.

I may be permitted to answer your letter as follows:—

1. Germany has never sought conflict with England and has never interfered in English interests. On the contrary, she has for years endeavoured—although unfortunately in vain—to win England's friendship. On this account she voluntarily assumed in a wide area of Europe the limitations on her own interests which from a national-political point of view it would have otherwise been very difficult to tolerate.

2. The German Reich, however, like every other State possesses certain definite interests which it is impossible to renounce. These do not extend beyond the limits of the necessities laid down by former German history and deriving from vital economic pre-requisites. Some of these questions held and still hold a significance both of a national-political and a psychological character which no German Government is able to ignore.

To these questions belong the German City of Danzig, and the connected problem of the Corridor. Numerous statesmen, historians and men of letters even in England have been conscious of this at any rate up to a few years ago. I would add that all these territories lying in the aforesaid German sphere of interest and in particular those lands which returned to the Reich eighteen months ago received their cultural development at the hands not of the English but exclusively of the Germans and this, moreover, already from a time dating back over a thousand years.

3. Germany was prepared to settle the questions of Danzig and of the Corridor by the method of negotiation on the basis of a proposal of truly unparalleled magnanimity. The allegations disseminated by England regarding a German mobilisation against Poland, the assertion of aggressive designs towards Roumania, Hungary, &c., as well as the so-called guarantee declarations which were subsequently

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given had, however, dispelled Polish inclination to negotiate on a basis of this kind which would have been tolerable for Germany also.

4. The unconditional assurance given by England to Poland that she would render assistance to that country in all circumstances regardless of the causes from which a conflict might spring, could only be interpreted in that country as an encouragement thenceforward to unloosen, under cover of such a charter, a wave of appalling terrorism against the one and a half million German inhabitants living in Poland. The atrocities which since then have been taking place in that country are terrible for the victims, but intolerable for a Great Power such as the German Reich which is expected to remain a passive onlooker during these happenings. Poland has been guilty of numerous breaches of her legal obligations towards the Free City of Danzig, has made demands in the character of ultimata, and has initiated a process of economic strangulation.

5. The Government of the German Reich therefore recently caused the Polish Government to be informed that it was not prepared passively to accept this development of affairs, that it will not tolerate further addressing of notes in the character of ultimata to Danzig, that it will not tolerate a continuance of the persecutions of the German minority, that it will equally not tolerate the extermination of the Free City of Danzig by economic measures, in other words, the destruction of the vital bases of the population of Danzig by a kind of Customs blockade, and that it will not tolerate the occurrence of further acts of provocation directed against the Reich. Apart from this, the questions of the Corridor and of Danzig must and shall be solved.

6. Your Excellency informs me in the name of the British Government that you will be obliged to render assistance to Poland in any such case of intervention on the part of Germany. I take note of this statement of yours and assure you that it can make no change in the determination of the Reich Government to safeguard the interests of the Reich as stated in paragraph 5 above. Your assurance to the effect that in such an event you anticipate a long war is shared by myself. Germany, if attacked by England, will be found prepared and determined. I have already more than once declared before the German people and the world that there can be no doubt concerning the determination of the new German Reich rather to accept, for however long it might be, every sort of misery and tribulation than to sacrifice its national interests, let alone its honour.

7. The German Reich Government has received information to the effect that the British Government has the intention to carry out measures of mobilisation which, according to the statements contained in your own letter, are clearly directed against Germany alone. This is said to be true of France as well. Since Germany has never had the intention of taking military measures other than those of a defensive character against England or France, and, as has already been emphasised, has never intended, and does not in the future intend, to attack England or France, it follows that this announcement as

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confirmed by you, Mr. Prime Minister, in your own letter, can only refer to a contemplated act of menace directed against the Reich. *I therefore inform your Excellency that, in the event of these military announcements being carried into effect, I shall order immediate mobilisation of the German forces.*

8. The question of the treatment of European problems on a peaceful basis is not a decision which rests on Germany but primarily on those who since the crime committed by the Versailles dictate have stubbornly and consistently opposed any peaceful revision. Only after a change of spirit on the part of the responsible Powers can there be any real change in the relationship between England and Germany. I have all my life fought for Anglo-German friendship; the attitude adopted by British diplomacy—at any rate up to the present—has, however, convinced me of the futility of such an attempt. Should there be any change in this respect in the future nobody could be happier than I.

ADOLF HITLER.

No. 61.

Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

(Translation.)

THE Government of the German Reich and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, guided by the desire to strengthen the cause of peace between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and taking as a basis the fundamental regulations of the Neutrality Agreement concluded in April 1926 between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, have reached the following agreement:—

Article 1. The two Contracting Parties bind themselves to refrain from any act of force, any aggressive action and any attack on one another, both singly and also jointly with other Powers.

Art. 2. In the event of one of the Contracting Parties becoming the object of warlike action on the part of a third Power, the other Contracting Party shall in no manner support this third Power.

Art. 3. The Governments of the two Contracting Parties shall in future remain continuously in touch with one another, by way of consultation, in order to inform one another on questions touching their joint interests.

Art. 4. Neither of the two Contracting Parties shall participate in any grouping of Powers which is directed directly or indirectly against the other Party.

Art. 5. In the event of disputes or disagreements arising between the Contracting Parties on questions of this or that kind, both Parties would clarify these disputes or disagreements exclusively by means of friendly exchange of opinion or, if necessary, by arbitration committees.

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OFFICE OF U.S. CHIEF OF COUNSEL FOR WAR CRIMES

EVIDENCE DIVISION

Date : 2 August 1948

I certify that Document Number TC-72-60 was introduced into evidence as Exhibit Number GB-56 in the Trial by the International Tribunal of Hermann GOERING, et al, which commenced on 20 November 1945, and that the attached photostat is a true and correct copy of the original.

Fred Niebergall

Fred NIEBERGALL
Chief, Document
Control Branch.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the annexed document TC-92-60 No. GB-56 is a photostat of an original document submitted in evidence by the Britischen Prosecution under this number. The original document has been withdrawn in accordance with Rule 10 of the International Military Tribunal, and to the best of my knowledge and belief is to be held at the OCCWC Evidence Library, Palace of Justice, Nuremberg

Paul Joosten

PAUL A. JOOSTEN

General Secretary
International Military Tribunal

Nuremberg, 28 July 1948

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